



MEPI Algiers celebrates Martin Luther King, Jr. Day



On Tuesday, January 20, MEPI Algiers hosted its first forum of 2015 titled: **"The Forgotten Ones: Migrants, Persons with Disabilities, and People Living with HIV/AIDS."** Ambassador Polaschik told guests that Dr. King's call for "equal opportunity for all" is a cherished universal principle that requires dedicated efforts by all to ensure its implementation. While protecting the rights of minority groups is a critical piece of the larger mission of upholding human rights, members of minority communities sometimes are excluded from mainstream human rights advocacy efforts.

Ambassador Polaschik at the Embassy's MEPI Forum.

[Continued on Page 2](#)

Médecins du Monde

"Training to reinforce lawyers' skills on migrants' rights"



[Continued on Page 2](#)

Zoom !

Taki Eddine Bouyoucef
MEPI Student Leaders 2014

"The Student Leaders Program changed me, I am no longer the same after MEPI"



[Personal Testimony on Page 4](#)

MEPI Forum : "The Forgotten Ones"



Panelists from Médecins du Monde (MdM), UNAIDS, and Handicap International discussed their experiences working with migrants, the disabled, and those living with HIV/AIDS in Algeria. They shared with the audience the challenges members of these communities face and the support programs provided to assist them. Charlotte De Bussy, General Coordinator of MdM in Algeria, described how many sub-Saharan migrants flee their home countries due to civil unrest and lack of economic opportunities. The primary concern of MdM is to improve migrants' access legal and health services.

Aude Bumbacher Kellou, Chief of Mission for Handicap International in Algeria, informed the audience that a survey conducted by investigators from The Algerian Federation of the Disabled who interviewed 1379 families in Algiers found that 9.7% of the families have at least one member with disabilities at home, 50% of those persons with disabilities did not attend school past the primary level, and 74% of them live on 4000 dinars (~\$45) per month. Adel Zaddam, Director of UNAIDS Algeria, explained that continued, strong awareness campaigns continue to inform the Algerian population about HIV/AIDS prevention. UNAIDS' efforts - in collaboration with different civil society and government actors - are focused on creating a roadmap to eliminate new infections and discrimination of the disease in Algeria with the following slogan: "Zero HIV infection. Zero discrimination".

Workshop: "Strengthen migrants' access to health and human rights"

Médecins du Monde (MdM) Algeria launched its one year, MEPI-funded project: "Strengthen migrants' access to health and human rights". The project focuses on the sub-Saharan African migrants and aims



strengthen civil society's capacity to provide legal assistance and to facilitate access to health care. MdM organized a three-day training session on February 1 in Oran for 22 lawyers representing eight Algerian cities (Algiers, Oran, Bejaia, Constantine, Mascara, Mostaganem, Tlemcen and Illizi). The training focused on reinforcing law-

yers' capability to provide legal assistance to members of this vulnerable, minority group. Three trainers with legal background covered pertinent topics such as employment rights, irregular stay, asylum and refu-

gee status, access to health care, violence and plea submission, and birth registration in Algeria for both legal and illegal residents. Participating lawyers described the training as rich and diverse and one attorney said: "Now we have a legal arsenal at our disposal to help this community in our country."

NDI's MEPI-Funded Project: "Enhancing Women's Political Engagement"

The National Democratic Institute (NDI), under the MEPI-funded program, "Enhancing Women's Political Engagement," organized on February 7 and 14 workshops in Algiers to teach communication skills to 30 locally elected women of different political parties from both the local and state government assemblies. Mr. Johan Hamels, an international political expert and consultant, taught the women strategies to effectively communicate - with constituents,



to their party, and to the media - and also how to use media to amplify their messaging. This two-day training provided an excellent opportunity for participants from different political parties to learn together, network, and to share their experiences and best practices. One participant commented, *"I benefited a lot from this training. I became familiar with many concepts I did not know before. I would like to thank you for inviting us and letting us share a lot of interesting things that will help us in the future."* Another said, *"Thank you for this support which is a breath of fresh air! I would love if you could organize more trainings for us as I could find here the missing resources I was looking for."*

MEPI Algiers reinforces NGOs' capacities; provides for financial autonomy

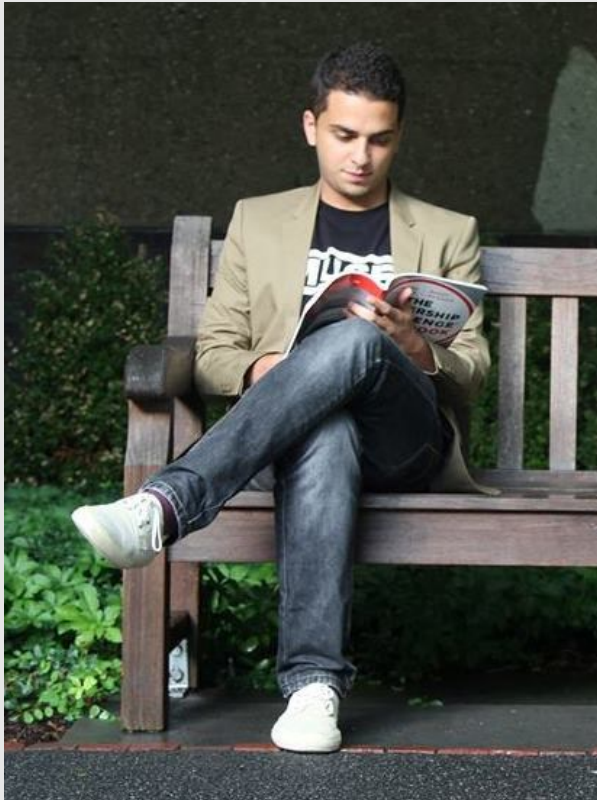


MEPI Algiers Administrator Samir Ikhlef hosted the annual "NGO Capacity-Building Workshop" on January 17 at US Embassy Algiers. The workshop provided 45 representatives from new associations, clubs, and non-profit organizations training to develop better organization, communication, and financial skills to facilitate effective management and financial autonomy. The participants also shared best practices and their experiences on various topics such as fundraising, proposal writing, branding, project design, and communication. The following

organizations from all regions of Algeria attended the training: Youth Capacities Development of Biskra, Association Nationale pour le Promotion et le Divertissement des Jeune, ADDEM, Eco-Nature, Association pour la Sauvegarde de la Jeunesse de la wilaya of Boumerdes, Association Nationale des Chercheurs Algériens, Association Excellence, Amideast, Kouba United, Association Parole et Action of Akbou, la Voix d'Apulee, Aéroclub of Béjaia, UNI-VERT, Bariq 21, AAJI of Oran, Association pour les Relations Algéros Américaines, Indjaz Al Djazair, and NOMAD club. MEPI Algiers looks forward to another productive session soon!

ZOOM...

“Every minute, every street corner, every person, was a new lesson, a lifetime lesson”



I knew that a big part of my knowledge and intellectual maturity will be acquired by travelling, but I sure did not expect it to be that intense and rich. Maybe it is so because it was my first time abroad, or maybe because it's the United States, and if it was another country, the outcome wouldn't have been the same. But in either way, it changed me, I am no longer the same after MEPI.

The leadership institute of Roger Williams University provided a high quality curriculum on organizational leadership and management. It was a homogenous mixture of lectures and workshops that were delivered by top lecturers in the field, and also world class site visits to institutions and companies I never dreamed of visiting.

MEPI at Roger Williams was more than just substantial academic courses, it was emotional attachment in a way I never experienced before. I loved Arab countries and felt related to them since I was a child, and now I love them more after I met and made best friends among young people from

the MENA region. We shared unforgettable memories of loud laughs and painful goodbye tears at the end of the program. At the end of MEPI I felt both terrified and grateful. Terrified, simply because I just passed the best 6 weeks of my life and I am not sure if what is coming in the future will be better or even close. Grateful, because I had the chance to enjoy every bit of it, from cooking sessions at Roger Williams University, to late night discussions in my room with my MEPI friends, to history lessons taught by a barbershop, to standing with the law and defending the oppressed at Harvard University and the UN Headquarters in New York City.

I thought it was the end, but in fact it's the beginning of a new life that MEPI has just boosted on personal and professional levels. I wish I could live the MEPI experience again, but then it would lose its meaning, and as Rebecca, our program assistant, said, “Don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened.” I'm smiling and grateful to all those who contributed in making my MEPI experience a memorable one. Thank you!

